

Top Secret

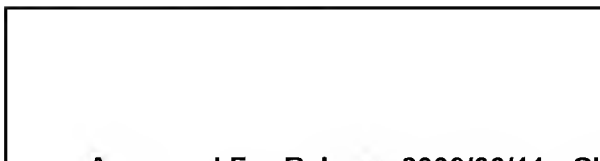


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South Vietnam: [President Thieu is preparing to move against one of his most vocal political opponents.]

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[redacted] Thieu--despite the misgivings of his premier and justice minister--has ordered legal charges of subversion to be prepared for the arrest of Tran Ngoc Lieng, chairman of the National Progressive Force. Lieng is active in left-of-center South Vietnamese circles but enjoys little personal political support. He has urged a more accommodating attitude toward the Communists and has loudly criticized Thieu's handling of opposition groups, particularly some Buddhist factions.]

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[Thieu's legal adviser is working on the case, but [redacted] a special police branch has so far been unable to provide him with solid evidence to link Lieng with the Viet Cong. Lieng is now under close surveillance.]

[The fact that Thieu has evidently decided to move against a figure of such limited political backing suggests that he is increasingly nervous and testy over political opposition.]

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Libya: [Libya has reportedly signed an arms agreement with France.]

[On 15 November, a Libyan mission headed by a representative of the Revolutionary Command Council signed an agreement with French Minister of Defense Debre [redacted]

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The agreement provides for an arms package, which includes 300 aircraft of various types, tanks, and flight training for Libyan pilots. Among the aircraft will be an unspecified number of Mirage supersonic fighters. Another clause calls for French "military support" should Libya be attacked by its neighbors. The precise meaning of "support" is not clear [redacted]

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[This assistance could provide French technicians capable of replacing the US training mission and of taking over the operation of Wheelus Field if the present US-Libyan agreement is terminated, as Libya has requested.]

[In addition [redacted]

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[redacted] Libya recently asked Bonn to broaden its training program for Libyan military personnel. West Germany is apparently agreeable in principle, but details remain to be decided.]

[The French have been pressing for closer relations with Libya, whose vast oil resources offer France a nearby source of petroleum. Such an arms agreement would provide timely assistance to Libya just as it is diversifying its sources of military aid.]

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Venezuela-USSR: [Venezuela and the Soviet Union will re-establish diplomatic relations in January,

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[redacted] The main obstacle to renewing relations has been lack of agreement on the size of the Soviet Embassy staff. Now, after nearly a year of negotiations, Venezuela has finally granted the Soviet request for a staff of 30. Funds for the embassy in Moscow reportedly have been requested as part of Venezuela's 1970 budget, and the foreign minister and the chief of protocol plan to visit Moscow next month to complete the arrangements.]

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Hungary-Czechoslovakia: [A Hungarian official has voiced Budapest's fear that a continued conservative drift in Czechoslovakia might result in pressures on Hungary to adopt repressive policies. The implications of the current situation in Czechoslovakia worry the Hungarians as much as did Dubcek's liberal deviation last year. Party leader Kadar will visit Prague soon, probably to assess the trend of events and to urge Czechoslovak party boss Husak to steer a moderate course.]

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